**PLEASE NOTE!** BLUE text is to highlight instructions only. Delete all BLUE text before sending.

Your Name

Your Address

 Your Address

Your Address

Date

Recipient Name

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Dear Sir / Madam, [MSP NAME]

[Find details of your local MSP at <https://www.parliament.scot/msps/current-msps.aspx> and your local Councillors are available at your local authority website]

**Restrictions on Blended Care/Placements and the**

**Impact on Childminding, Children, Families and Parental Choice**

The current restrictions on blended care/placements (i.e. where a child attends my childminding service and another setting such as a nursery) in national Scottish Government operating guidance are causing significant problems for my childminding business, and the children and families I support.

If the restrictions on blended care are to continue, my childminding service will struggle to remain financially sustainable. This will have an adverse effect on me, the families I support and on the local economy.

I have very much supported the cautious and considered approach adopted by the Scottish Government which has enabled us to suppress the virus. However, as the risks reduce, there is also an increasing need to take into account the economic and social impact of COVID-19 on families and childcare providers which is becoming more critical by the day. This was highlighted in a recent survey by the Scottish Childminding Association which found that only 19% of childminders in Scotland believe their businesses will still be viable in 12 months’ time if restrictions on blended care continue after the schools return. As such, this could have a devastating effect on childminding businesses and on parental choice. This could also have a significant adverse impact on the wider out of school care sector. Following this SCMA called on the Scottish Government to urgently make an unequivocal commitment, in advance, to removing all restrictions on blended care by the time the schools return on 11 August (subject to continued progress in suppressing the virus).

In response to this, the Scottish Government has now stated that it “hopes to be in a position to lift the restrictions on blended placements alongside the return of schools subject to expert advice and suppression of the virus and will confirm by 31 July whether this restriction can be lifted at the same time as schools return”.

While this a positive step, I do not believe this commitment goes far enough. We (childminders and parents/carers) need clarity that all restrictions on blended care will be lifted on childminding settings before the schools go back, so that these are allowed and childminders are able to drop off and pick up children. In addition, it is essential that the Scottish Government also takes account into the economic impact of COVID-19 on childminding businesses when considering if these restrictions can be lifted.

Removal of these restrictions on blended care are required to ensure the financial sustainability of my childminding service, where I provide high-quality, flexible childcare to meet the needs of the [insert the number of children and families you support] children and families that I currently support in [insert your local area].

As my local representative, I would ask that you to urge the Scottish Government to fully commit to removing all restrictions on blended care, subject to ongoing progress in suppressing the virus and also to including the economic impact of COVID-19 on childminding businesses when considering if these restrictions can be lifted.

I look forward to your response.

Yours sincerely,

[insert your signature]

[insert your name]